

## Kevin Weddle featured in History Channel's 'Washington'

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*Dr. Kevin Weddle, retired Army colonel and Army War College professor, is a featured historian in the History Channel's mini-series "Washington."*

Doris Kearns Goodwin, Pulitzer-winning historian and presidential biographer, watched this Army War College historian talk about George Washington in a new documentary, complimented his work, and personally

invited him to join her at Mount Vernon for the premier earlier this month. But Dr. Kevin Weddle doesn't plan to watch himself. Everyone else can.

Weddle is a featured historian in the mini-series, "Washington," featured on the History Channel this month and streaming on that channel in three episodes about George Washington: Loyal Subject, Rebel Commander, and Father of His Country. Goodwin described in a radio interview how this production weaves "dramatic" live action alongside interviews with President Bill Clinton, Secretary Colin Powell, and featured historians, with narrator Jeff Daniels.

"The great joy for me in this project has been working alongside gifted and seasoned filmmakers and network executives and learning about George Washington through the research, primary documents and the interviews with my esteemed colleagues who have studied Washington for much of their lives," said Goodwin.

Ironically, Washington has not been Weddle's focus for "much of his life." He might have called himself a Civil War historian at one time, but the Revolutionary War was one of his PhD program fields of study at Princeton University. And, he's incorporated 10 years of Washington research into his book that will publish next year about the Saratoga Campaign of the War for Independence and the 1776-78 timeframe. Weddle's insights about that period became segments of the mini-series in Episode 1, briefly, and extensively in Episode 2 about the war.

"The thing I found fascinating about that campaign is that Washington is usually disregarded -- but he was important, and one of the main characters in my book for that reason," he said.

"Here's Washington with the main army near Philadelphia, and there's an invasion that takes place up on Lake Champlain heading south and there's another American army facing that. But Washington is the commander in chief, so he's not just focused on what he has to do. He's acting as a true commander in chief, providing that commander up in New York, 200 miles away, with resources, with counsel, trying to call out the militia to help stop the British. He's acting as a true commander in chief while he's still trying to fight his army against the British main army," said Weddle. "The British commander in chief doesn't do that. He's focused on Washington's army, doesn't care what else is going on. And that's going to end up hurting the British effort in 1777. In the book, I made this stark contrast between Washington's performance during that period and that of the British commander in chief during the same period."

“Most historians look at that period and say it really was not his best five, six months. The British were able to capture Philadelphia; he lost the battle of Brandywine and Germantown. I would counter and say, I thought it was absolutely one of the best periods because he sets the conditions to win the battles of Saratoga and capture that British army up [north].

“Without him, we would not have been successful up there and the war might have been lost in 1777,” he said. “Historians don’t like to say that somebody is indispensable, but I think he was absolutely ‘the indispensable man’,” he said, referencing the title of another Washington biography.

It’s unsurprising that Weddle would look at that period with a unique perspective. He weaves academic knowledge, 30 years of Army leadership, and many years teaching Army War College students about strategic leadership and strategy development. Recently, Princeton University undergrad students caught his unique insights about World War II, and notably about the role of strategic leaders like Eisenhower, Patton, Montgomery; he spent a semester as the William L. Garwood Visiting Professor at Princeton University.

His book promises a similar viewpoint.

“If anybody reads my book,” he said with a laugh, “they’ll see that the stuff we teach at the war college comes out – the way we think of strategy, the way we think of leadership. Those are the two big themes that run through the book.”

“**Washington** tells the story of how a fatherless young soldier full of personal ambition becomes a leader of men willing to sacrifice all for the common cause. How a once-loyal British subject rises to battle an empire in a liberty-or-death campaign to forge a new nation. And then how, at the zenith of his power, the victorious general voluntarily steps down, becoming what King George III would call “the greatest man in the world.” – History Channel web site.